

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

We write to express our concern about the impact of the faltering economy on our constituents and communities. While the stimulus package approved earlier by Congress has helped many families across the country, we believe that a second stimulus plan is necessary to assist more Americans with the rising cost of living.

Thus, we respectfully request that Congress quickly approve a second stimulus measure that includes funding for the Food Stamps Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Woman, Infants and Children's Program (WIC). Specifically, we request a 20 percent temporary increase in Food Stamps; \$100 million for TEFAP; and \$150 million for the WIC Program.

While the Farm Bill Conference Report includes long-term increases and improvements in these programs, the reforms will take as many as five years to be fully implemented. The families who rely on these programs need assistance today.

Economic experts from across the political spectrum -- ranging from former economic advisor Martin Feldstein to former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers -- agree that a temporary increase in the Food Stamp Program will provide a direct and immediate stimulus to the economy. In the last several months, all Americans have been buffeted by an economy marred by soaring gas prices, rising food costs and a deepening housing crisis.

At the same time, our food banks and pantries have had difficulties stocking shelves and meeting demand. Consequently, those who rely on these institutions are receiving less food, further straining family budgets and forcing people to make hard choices between buying food and paying for utilities and medicines. Meanwhile, rising milk and poultry prices are quickly exhausting WIC funds.

Clearly, the time is now to provide assistance to low- and middle-income families struggling to make ends meet.

We thank you for your commitment to America's families, and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks on this important matter.

Sincerely,